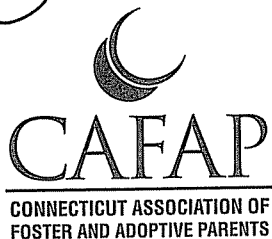


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February 8, 2011

HB 5120

Good Morning, Representative Urban, and members of the Select Committee on Children.

I am speaking in support of HB 5120, An Act Concerning Educational Financial Assistance for Children Adopted Through the Department of Children and Families.

I am a social worker and public policy liaison with the CT Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents. Our agency supports, trains and advocates for foster, adoptive and relative caregiver parents in the State.

In 2005, the Department of Children and Families provided a budget option to allow postsecondary education tuition assistance for children who were adopted after January 1, 2005. Since that time, 26 students have requested the assistance. For the majority of these students, a very small portion of their expenses have been provided by DCF because the students are required to seek scholarships and grants prior to applying for aid through DCF.

We have been in contact with many adoptive families in the state who have adopted several children from the Department of Children and Families. Many have one child who is eligible for assistance while their other adopted child/children are not eligible because they were adopted prior to 2005. The children who are adopted through the state of CT have already faced many challenges in their lives: abuse/neglect, loss and grief, and often adjusting to multiple families and schools. The families who have reached out to adopt these children have broken the cycle of the child's moves.

Passage of this bill will allow all children who are adopted from the Department of Children and Families to benefit with assistance for their higher education. This not only benefits the child, but, as an educated future taxpayer, the child will become a contributing member to their community.

I urge support of the proposed bill, HB 5120.

2008 Recipient of The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's *Angel in Adoption Award*